

regarding the influence of the social environment on intelligence test scores.

H. J. EYSENCK.

HOMOSEXUALITY

Hyde, H. Montgomery (Editor). *The Trials of Oscar Wilde*. London, 1948. William Hodge. Pp. 384, 16 plates. Price 15s.

THE death of Lord Alfred Douglas has enabled the subject of Oscar Wilde's fall to be discussed in an atmosphere free from the fear of writs for libel. Little is likely to be added to the findings of Hesketh Pearson's biography as regards the facts of the matter. From about the year 1886 Wilde had become increasingly addicted to homosexual practices. In 1895 he was egged on by Lord Alfred Douglas to prosecute the latter's father. The ostensible motive for the prosecution was the defence of Wilde's reputation ; but Douglas (pigheaded, ignorant, and spiteful) was far more concerned with hatred of his father than solicitude for his friend. Once the writ was issued the rest followed with all the inevitableness of a Greek tragedy. Either *hubris* or a masochistic desire for martyrdom led Wilde to ruin himself.

The addition of the Wilde trials to the "Notable British Trials" series will supersede *Oscar Wilde : Three Times Tried*, which Cecil Palmer published in collaboration with Stuart Mason, the bibliographer of Wilde's works, in 1912. The present reports are complete except for some heavy censoring of the evidence given by Wilde's accomplices. For what is omitted the curious reader will still have to rely on a scabrous publication issued by Carrington in Paris in the first decade of this century. These lacunæ are to some extent compensated for, however, by Appendix E, in which the exact nature of Wilde's activities is made clear.

The introduction and notes to the present volume are as valuable as the report itself. The editor gives exact references to all the basic authorities on his subject, and one can only regret the absence of a formal bibliography. An appendix on "The Prevalence

of Male Homosexuality in England" accepts perhaps a little too uncritically the views of foreigners such as Bloch, Raffalovich, and Hirschfeld. Public opinion on homosexuality has become increasingly humane since Wilde's day ; nevertheless an eminent member of the Bar in reviewing this volume expresses the hope that the only lesson that will be drawn from it will be the necessity of eradicating such "pests" from society. Yet the savage punishment inflicted on Wilde entirely defeated its object not only as regards the victim himself but also as regards society at large. It has made him an object of sympathy in the eyes of the civilized world, enhanced the importance of his literary works far beyond their intrinsic deserts, and drawn the attention of generations of students of English literature to the subject of homosexuality at an unnecessarily early age.

Sympathy with the victims of a barbarous legal persecution should not blind us to the fact that homosexuality presents society with a problem with which it has to deal. Homosexuals are foremost among those scavengers of love who hover round unhappy marriages and exasperate the difficulties of normal relationships, while their literary advocacy presents a view of life incompatible with biologically fertile social organization. One thing seems fairly certain : the hard core of genuine homosexuals is vastly increased by normal and borderline cases who are driven into the homosexual camp by the restrictions which modern society places on the satisfaction of heterosexual impulses.

The book under review has been banned in Eire under the Censorship of Publications Acts.

ALEC CRAIG.

NEGLECTED CHILDREN

Women's Group on Public Welfare. *The Neglected Child and His Family*. London, 1948. Cumberlege. Pp. 140. Price 5s.

THE Curtis Committee deliberately abstained from examining the problem of children who